

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01 /085 W

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R 291400Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 932

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USUN NEW YORK 456

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 628

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SP, SS, MO, UN

SUBJ: SAHARA ROUND-UP

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED ON JAN 25 THAT SEVEN SAHARAN STUDENTS AND ONE SPANISH STUDENT HAD BEEN JAILED IN TENERIFE (CANARY ISLANDS) UNDER THE CHARGE OF POSSESSION OF PROPAGANDA OF AN ILLEGAL SAHARAN POLITICAL-MILITARY ORGANIZATION. ACCORDING TO COURT RECORDS, MATERIAL IN QUESTION CONSISTED OF PAMPHLETS IN ARABIC AND SPANISH OF LIBERATION FRONT FOR SEKIT EL HAMRA AND RIO DE ORO. STUDENTS WERE HELD FROM JAN 13 TO JAN 27, WHEN REPORTEDLY FREED WITHOUT CONDITIONS.

2. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT FOLLOWING THESE ARRESTS MAJORITY OF SAHARAN STUDENTS NOW STUDYING AT COLEGIO MAYOR NUESTRA SENORA DE AFRICA IN MADRID HAD QUIT SCHOOL IN PROTEST AND HAD RETURNED TO SAHARA.

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3. MADRID DAILY "INFORMACIONES" REPORTED ON JAN 25 THAT SERIES OF GRENADE ATTACKS HAD OCCURRED IN EL AAIUN ABOUT JAN 22. REPORTEDLY GRENADES WERE THROWN AT TERRITORIAL POLICE BARRACKS AND AT CHECKPOINTS ON OUT-SKIRTS OF EL AAIUN. BOTH INCIDENTS PRODUCED SEVERAL CASUALTIES, NONE SERIOUS.

4. "INFORMACIONES" ALSO REPORTS SPECIAL SESSION OF SAHARAN ASSEMBLY WILL BE HELD IN MID-FEBRUARY IN WHICH GOVERNOR GENERAL WILL DISCUSS DECISION TO POSTPONE REFERENDUM. SAME ASSEMBLY MEETING WILL ALSO TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO APPROVE ELECTORS WHO IN TURN WILL CHOOSE WHAT WILL BE NEW SEMI-AUTONOMOUS SAHARAN GOVERNING COUNCIL.

5. SPANISH PRESS HAS TAKEN NOTE OF KINGDOM OF MOROCCO'S FOUR-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN JAN 27 ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL "HERALD TRIBUNE". PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE NOTED ACERBICLY THAT FOUR PAGE SPREAD MAKES POLITICAL PROPAGANDA REGARDING SAHARA UNDER GUISE OF INVESTMENT AND TRADE PROMOTION. (ABOUT ONE-HALF OF INSERT DEALS WITH SAHARAN ISSUE.) ANOTHER COMMENTATOR NOTES THAT MOROCCAN RHETORIC MAKES FREQUENT USE OF TERM "MOROCCAN-SAHARAN", AS IF MOROCCANS THINK ICJ HAS ALREADY RENDERED ITS JUDGEMENT.

6. COMMENT: SOURCES IN MIDDLE EAST DIRECTORATE OF MFA AND IN PRESIDENCIA STATE PRESS REPORTS OF ARRESTS OF STUDENTS AND OF VIOLENCE IN EL AAIUN, SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT, BUT THEY HAD NO DETAILS AS TO PROBABLE INSTIGATORS OF GRENADE ATTACKS. PRESIDENCIA OFFICIAL COMMENTED TO EMBOFFS THAT SAHARAN QUESTION HAS NOW BECOME SINGLE MOST PREOCCUPYING ISSUE FOR PRIME MINISTER ARIAS AND PRESIDENCIA STAFF.

7. ASKED BY EMBOFF WHEN GOS WOULD PUBLICLY DECLARE ITS INTENTIONS REGARDING UN-RECOMMENDED POSTPONEMENT OF REFERENDUM, DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS OF MFA STATED SPAIN WOULD SIMPLY QUIETLY GO ALONG WITH POSTPONEMENT. NOTING THAT SPANISH APPROACH THROUGHOUT THE
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SAHARA DISPUTE HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE THAT OF RIGOROUS ADHERENCE TO UN DECISIONS.
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